GERSHWIN

RHAPSODY IN BLUE FOR SOLO PIANO

EDITED BY MAURICE HINSON

AN ALFRED MASTERWORK EDITION

Alfred

GERSHWIN®

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This collection is dedicated to Ralph Votapek, with admiration and appreciation.

—Maurice Hinson

Foreword

In 1922, well-known American jazz conductor Paul Whiteman (1890–1967) commissioned George Gershwin (1898–1937) to write a jazz piece for piano and orchestra for a concert to be given at Aeolian Hall in New York City. The work came into being in early 1923 in the form of a two-piano sketch, which was orchestrated by Whiteman's arranger Ferde Grofé (1892–1972). Gershwin composed the work in three weeks and dedicated it to Paul Whiteman. Gershwin originally titled the work *American Rhapsody*, but his brother Ira Gershwin (1896–1983) came up with the name *Rhapsody in Blue.*

Gershwin wrote of the piece: *"There had been so much chatter about the limitations of jazz...that it had to be in strict time and stick to dance rhythms. I resolved...to kill that one misconception with one sturdy blow."*[1]

The performance of the piece was a brilliant success. It was recorded four months later by the Victor Talking Machine Company (later RCA Victor). *Rhapsody in Blue* catapulted Gershwin into a world-famous career. Furthermore, it brought jazz into the concert hall using a musical language that was fresh, spontaneous, and, above all, uniquely American—completely divorced from European influence and formal design.

(continued on page 32)

1 Walter Rimler. *A Gershwin Companion*, p. 81.

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Rhapsody in Blue

By George Gershwin

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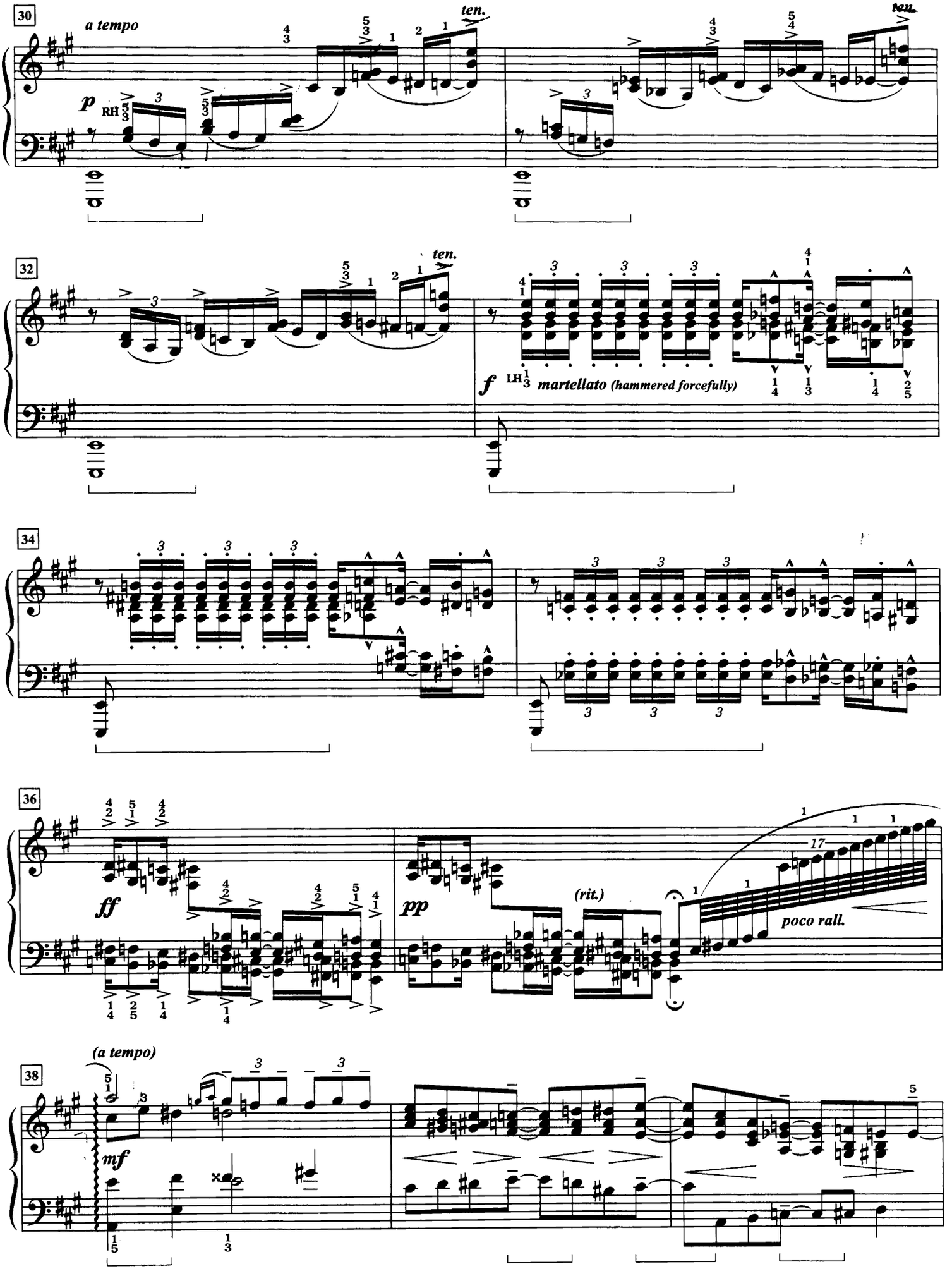
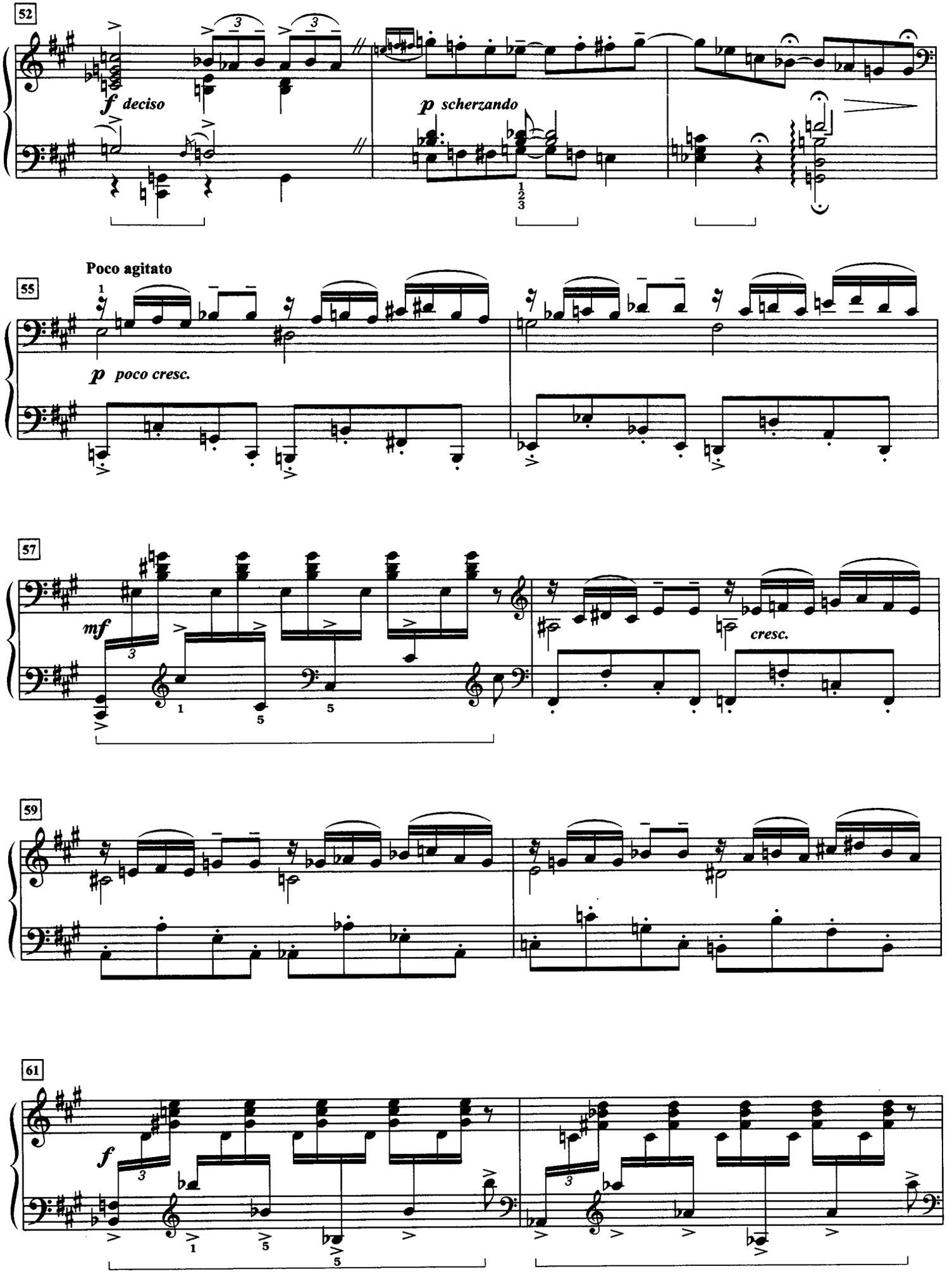
16
(a tempo)
p
19
Moderato assai (Very moderately)
mf tranquilo
f
22
24
mp poco scherzando
legato
27
pochissimo rall.


30
a tempo
ten.
p
RH
32
ten.
f
LH
martellato (hammered forcefully)
34
36
ff
pp
(rit.)
poco rall.
17
(a tempo)
38
mf

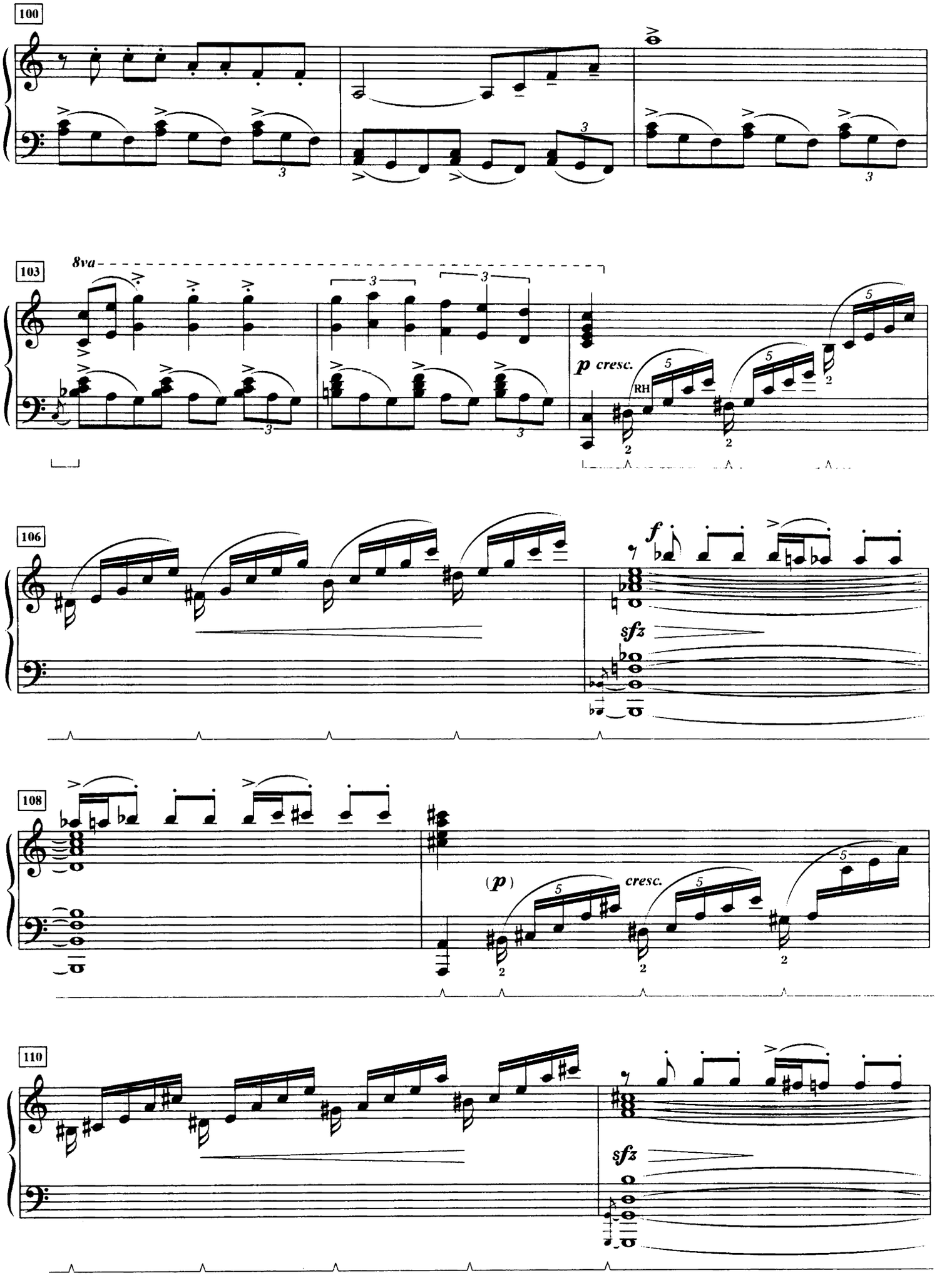
Ossia (alternate version)
8va
41
(più mosso)
(poco rit.)
43
(a tempo)
8va
46
48
p tranquillo

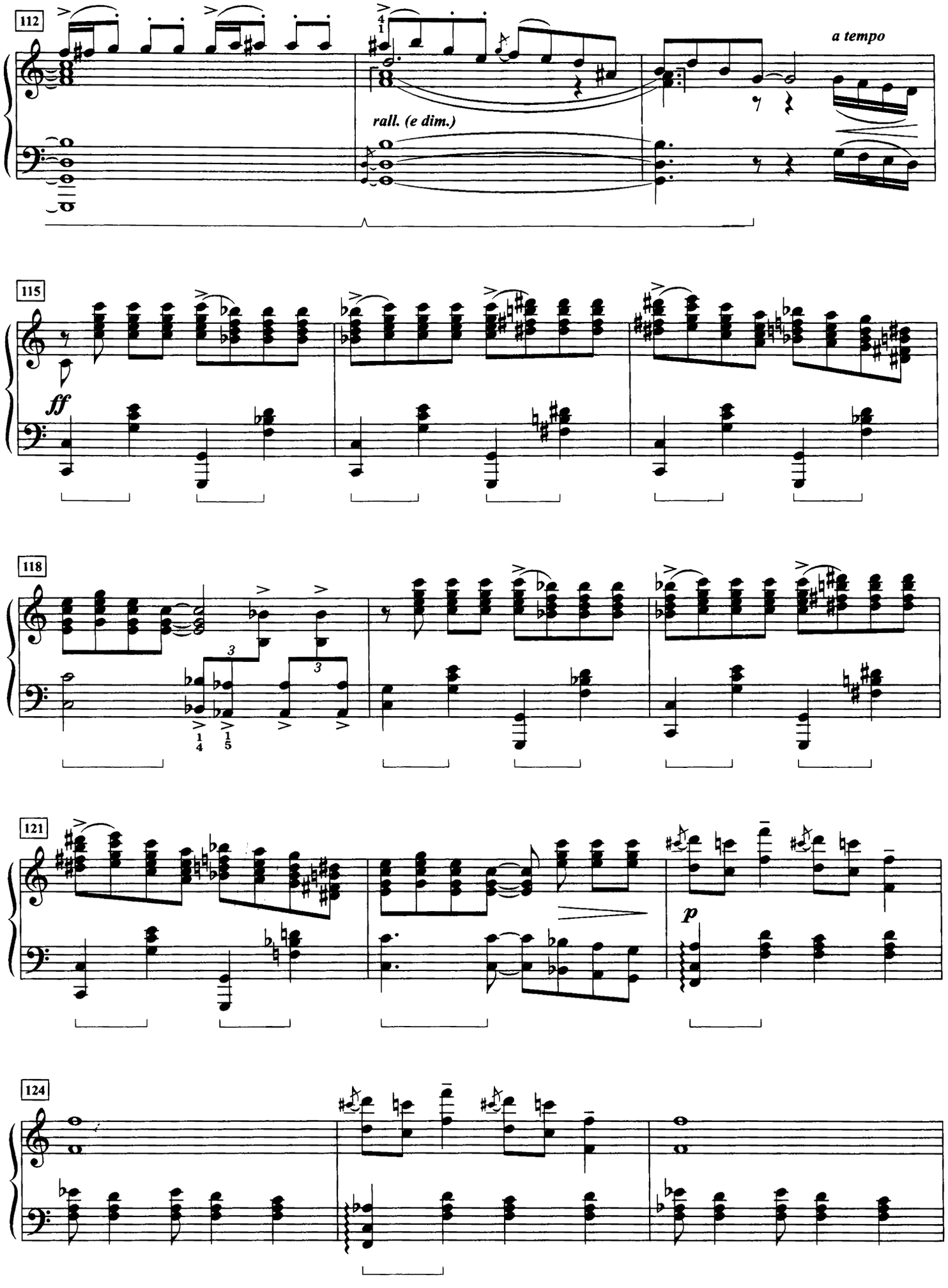

52
f deciso
p scherzando
Poco agitato
55
p poco cresc.
57
mf
cresc.
59
61
f

63
65
67
ff molto marcato
69
71

Tempo giusto (Strict tempo)
72
ff
75
f
78
81
p
RH
(cresc.)
8va
84
f

87
8va
cresc.
89
sff
91
8va
mf marcato
RH
94
8va
97
RH


100
103
8va
p cresc.
RH
106
f
sfz
108
(p)
cresc.
110
sfz


112
rall. (e dim.)
a tempo
115
ff
118
121
p
124

ⓐ The 1924 edition indicates that a cut may be made here, resuming at measure 197.

ⓑ The small notes in measures 151, 153, 170 and 172 are optional. They appear in the piano-and-orchestra and two-piano scores.

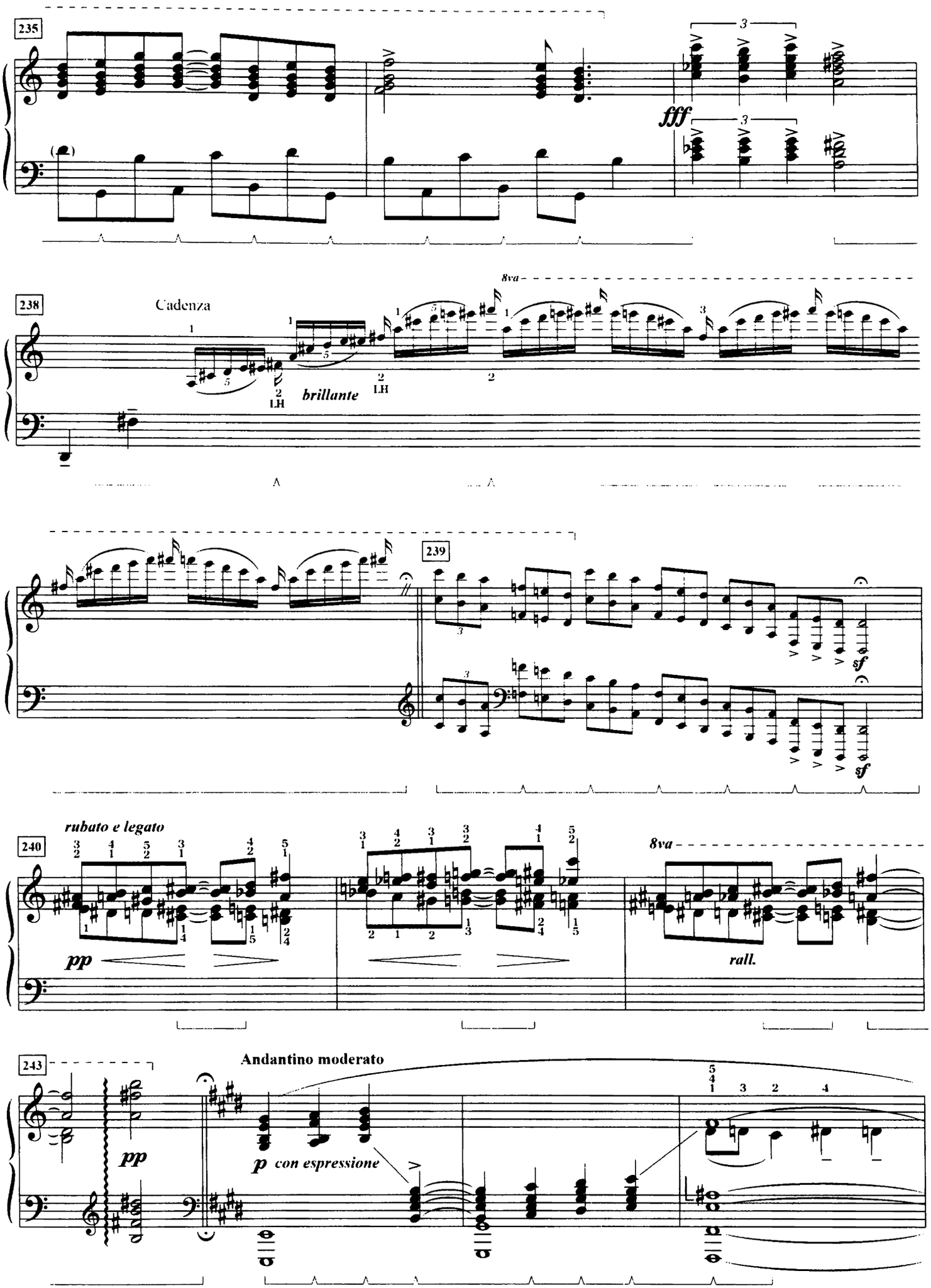
157
(a tempo)
p
160
p
163
RH
166
8va
169

172
p
174
8va
177
180
184
ff

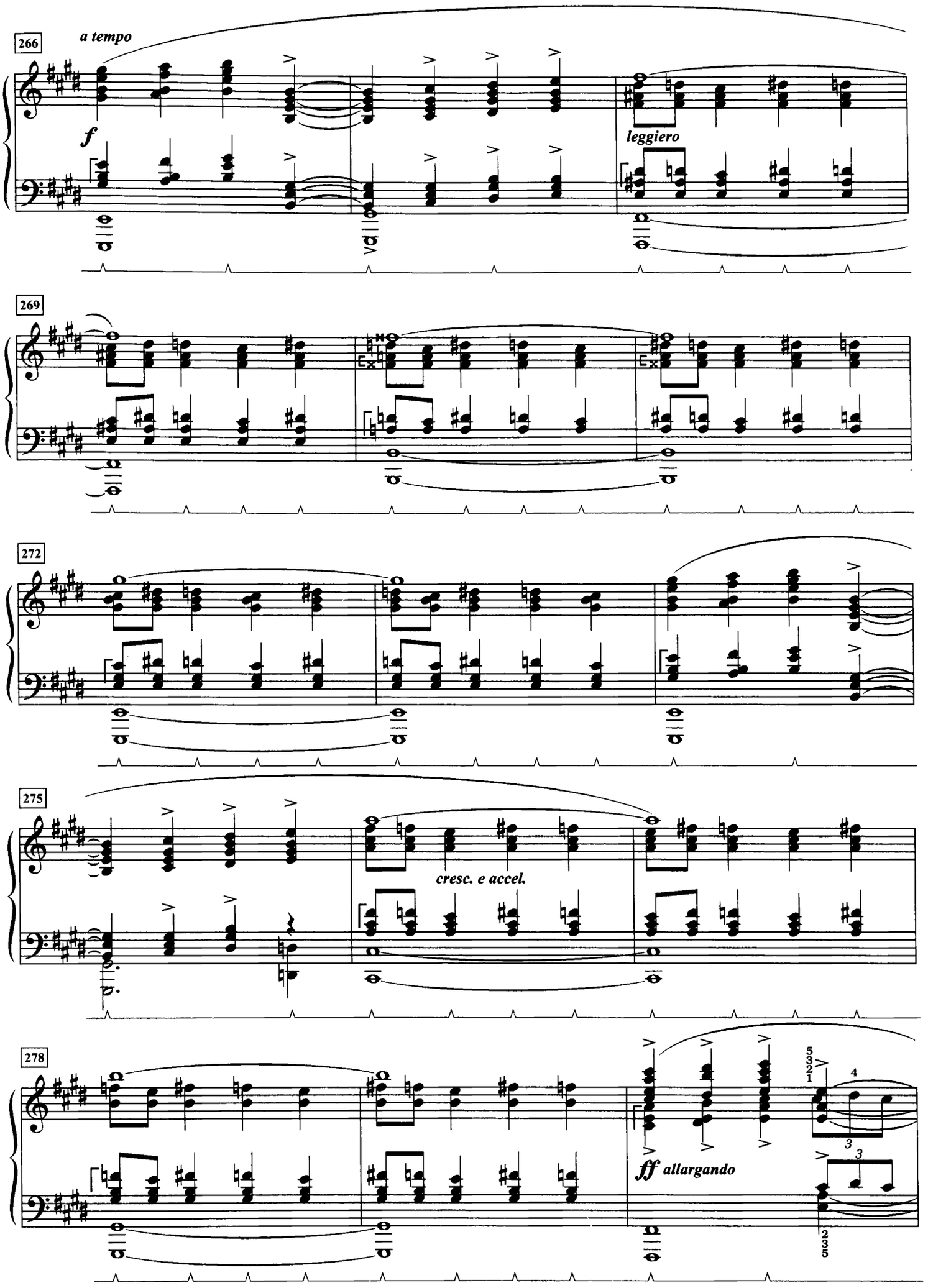
187
Meno (Not as slowly)
dim.
pp
poco accel.
cresc.
191
8va
f
cresc.
195
rall.
197
a tempo
mf
RH
(rit.)
RH
201
a tempo
LH
p
RH 2
RH

205
RH
209
213
RH
poco rall.
LH
217
a tempo
p
219
molto cresc.

221
ff
agitato
224
227
a tempo
p
230
cresc.
232
8va
martellato
ff agitato
simile


235
fff
238
Cadenza
brillante
8va
239
sf
240
rubato e legato
pp
8va
rall.
243
Andantino moderato
pp
p con espressione

247
251
(cresc.)
255
mf
259
262
p
rit.

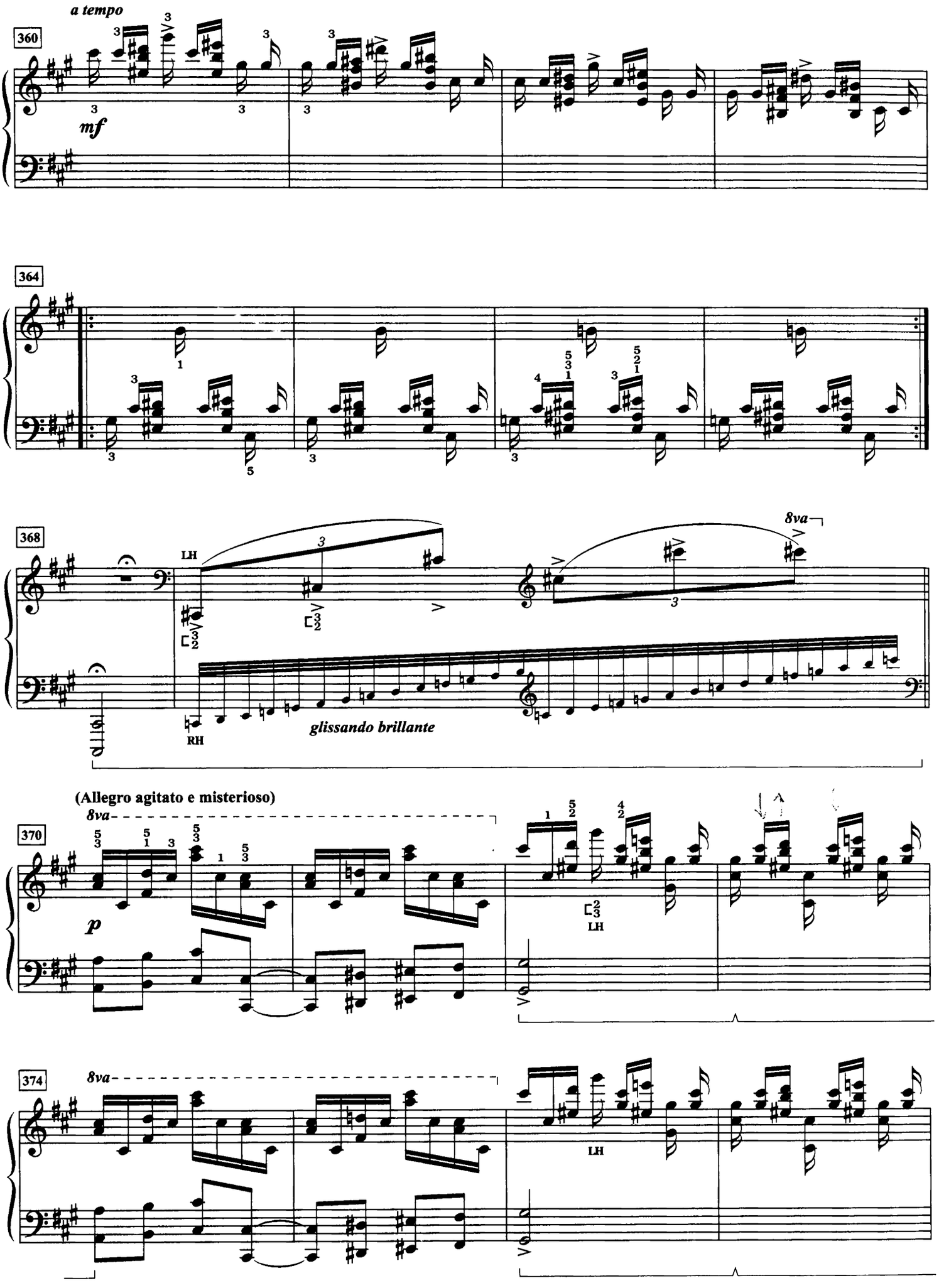

266
a tempo
f
leggiero
269
272
275
cresc. e accel.
278
ff allargando

© The 1924 edition indicates that a cut may be made here, resuming at measure 318.

300
8va
marcato
304
8va
308
8va
8va
312
mf espressivo
calmato
316

320
Leggiero
RH 3
324
LH 2
f assai staccato
p
328
Agitato e misterioso
mf sempre staccato
332
336

340
344
LH
348
352
356
sognando (dreamily)
rall. e dim.


a tempo
360
mf
364
368
LH
8va
RH
glissando brillante
(Allegro agitato e misterioso)
370
8va
p
LH
374
8va
LH

378
8va
poco a poco cresc.
brillante
(f)
LH
382
385
8va
388
391

394
Molto stentando (laboriously, slowing)
ff
simile
398
402
406
p agitato
410
poco a poco cresc.

413
416
8va
420
(accel.)
424
(molto marcato)
427
RH

Grandioso (grandly, imposing, not too slow)

430 ⓓ

ff marcato

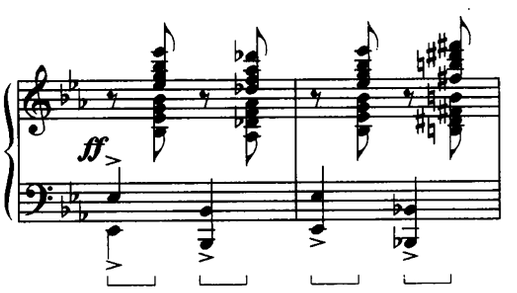
433

436

8va

439

ⓓ This editor suggests inserting these two measures, which appear in the piano-and-orchestra and two-piano scores.



441
8va
poco a poco rit.
443
445
Molto allargando
8va
ff
RH 1 2 3 5
LH
rapido
447
simile
tr
LH
449
8va
fff molto rit.
8va
sffz